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ABSTRACT

Artistic evaluation is a subjective process which focuses on the aesthetic qualities of an educational experience, rather than the more traditionally focus on the measurement of the outcomes of preestablished goals. It uses literary symbols, such as metaphor, voice, plot, and theme, to describe classroom settings, and to portray the personal qualities of, and interactions between teachers and students. These symbols were illustrated during the evaluation of an activities-oriented curriculum (City Building Program) by two professional evaluators. Seven teachers and administrators associated with the elementary classrooms which had implemented the curriculum discussed the evaluators' findings. Their opinions, ranging from enthusiasm to skepticism, focused on these concerns, some of which were unique to artistic evaluation: observation time; personal description; metaphor; plot; distance; release of results; and theoretician-practitioner gap. In conclusion, there is a need for feedback and interaction between evaluator and clients during the project, and before the release of findings. (CP)

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THE EVALUATOR AS ARTIST

A Discussion of Premises and Problems With Examples from Two Aesthetically Based Evaluations

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THE EVALUATOR AS ARTIST

A Discussion of Premises and Problems with Examples from Two Aesthetically Based Evaluations

O wad some Pow'r the giftie gie us
To see oursels as others see us!
-R. Burns

The limitations of the evaluation field's traditional emphasis on measurement of outcomes in terms of preestablished goals has prompted the development of alternative evaluation models and new roles for the educational evaluator. Levine's (1974) adversary model, for example, casts evaluators in the roles of prosecuting and defense attorneys. Scriven's (1972) goal free model transforms the evaluator into a sort of latter day philosopher-king. In the illuminative evaluation model of Parlett and Hamilton (1973), the evaluator becomes a quasi-anthropologist sans anthropological theory, and in Stake's (1975) responsive approach, the evaluator turns into a quasi-journalist who may occasionally editorialize but, for the most part, simply observes and interviews and reports his findings.

In addition to these models, an artistic model of educational evaluation, a model rooted in art and literary criticism, has begun to emerge. Mann (1968) was the first to utilize an artistic metaphor to conceptualize curriculum evaluation. He suggested that a curriculum might be viewed as a work of art and that the curriculum evaluator might function much as a literary critic does. Willis (1975) and Kelly (1975) expanded Mann's initial discussion. Advocates of the literary criticism model tended to focus on curriculum in its preactive form; in addition, most of the discussions of the literary criticism model emerged out of a reconceptualist orientation toward the curriculum field, an orientation which is concerned with the development of new ways of talking about curriculum and suspicious of the

field's traditional ameliorative emphasis (Pinar, 1975).

In the mid 1970's Elliot Eisner (1975, 1976, 1977) proposed a somewhat different version of the artistic model of curriculum evaluation in his discussions of educational connoisseurship and educational criticism. Eisner's examples were drawn from art rather than literary criticism, yet this difference was not the significant one. More significant was his expanded focus which included the interactive curriculum within the artistic evaluator's field of vision; also significant was Eisner's self conscious acceptance of both evaluation's traditional ameliorative function and its traditional reliance on social and behavioral science, although both the method of amelioration and the function of social science were somewhat different.

This paper focuses largely on the Eisner version of the artistic model, a version which assumes a weaker, more metaphorical relationship between the educational critic and the critic in the arts and in the field of literature. The paper grew out of the realization that while much has been written about educational criticism, there have been few actual examples of educational criticism presented for public scrutiny and even fewer discussions of the problems encountered by the evaluator-as-artist when he employs the artistic approach to evaluation in real classrooms to evaluate real programs and real teachers. My plan, therefore, is two-fold. First, I will illustrate the central ideas of artistic evaluation with excerpts from and references to critiques of two classrooms. These educational criticisms were part of a more general qualitative evaluation of the implementation of a curriculum in a California school district. Second, I will focus on certain problems with the artistic model of curriculum evaluation which emerged during and after this particular evaluation.

Before proceeding, however, it seems important to describe more fully the specific setting and circumstances of the evaluation from which the two criticisms were taken.

The Evaluation: Setting and Circumstances

The Curriculum

The curriculum which was being evaluated was The City Building Educational Program (Nelson, 1974), a multidisciplinary, experientially oriented curriculum emphasizing group process skills, problem solving and the development of intuition. The curriculum which was developed by a team of educators and architectural consultants is organized around activities as opposed to objectives,[2] specifically, activities related to the planning and construction of a city of the future. The particular version of The City Building Educational Program implemented in the evaluated setting emphasized architecture and, in fact, architects and students of architecture served as classroom consultants. The curriculum guide does not designate a specific age group with which the curriculum is to be used, but many of the activites, e.g.,activites related to scale, require skills which most students do not posess until they reach the upper elementary or middle school years. The curriculum is designed to be somewhat open ended, however, so in principle, at least, it could be adapted to different ages by eliminating or altering some of the activities.

The Curriculum and the School District

The school district where the evaluation occurred was located in a rural area of California with a large percentage of migrant students. The City Building Program in this district was, in fact, partially funded with migrant education funds and was directed by the Director of Migrant Education who was personally enthusiastic about the program's activity

oriented philosophy and felt it was particularly appropriate to the needs of migrant students. The program was also supported by a grant from the school board. To appeal to this group, the program's name was changed to The City Building Basic Skills Program, and its potential for helping students learn the 3 R's was emphasized. In the curriculum guide, this benefit is treated peripherally.

The City Building Program is designed as a one year curriculum; due to funding delays, it was not implemented in this district until February. The program was implemented by five volunteer teachers in their respective classrooms after a brief inservice training program; several teachers had previously used the program in the district's summer program for migrant children. The program was implemented at the following levels: kindergarten, first grade, third grade, a fifth-sixth grade combination, and seventh grade.

The Evaluation

The evaluation consisted of a qualitative assessment of the curriculum guide itself, educational criticisms of the the five classrooms which had implemented the program, and an overview of the program based on issues raised in the specific classroom and curriculum criticisms.

The evaluation was conducted by two evaluators from Stanford University. Each evaluator observed and critiqued two or three classrooms individually; the critique of the curriculum guide and the program overview were the product of consultation. Individual classroom criticisms were written after an extremely brief period of observation: two school days in the beginning of June. Budgetary considerations precluded more extended observation time.

The evaluation was to be formative in purpose, and its audience was to be the program's teachers and director. We were informed, however, that the

program participants might opt to distribute the evaluation report to other administrators and to the members of the school board. These groups would decide whether the City Building Program would be continued, terminated, expanded, or altered in some other way.

This cursory description of the evaluation context should be sufficient to serve as a backdrop for the following discussion. The first part of that discussion focuses on the central ideas of artistic evaluation and utilizes two of the criticisms from the City Building evaluation to illustrate these ideas.

The Evaluator as Artist

Aesthetic Content and Aesthetic Form

The educational critic functions as an artist and art critic in two related ways. First, he/she focuses on the aesthetic aspects, i.e. the qualities, of an educational experience. Second, he/she uses aesthetic forms of communication to present his/her findings to the audience.

Langer (1957) has emphasized that artistic symbols are presentational in character, i.e. their meaning is embodied in their form. Ordinary discourse, as well as discourse in science and mathematics, utilizes representational symbols; "c-a-t" and "1 + 1=2" have no meaning in and of themselves. Rather they receive their meaning by conventional association.

Representational symbols and the extended symbolizing process known as reasoning have great utility. Discursive form, however, cannot accommodate all aspects of experience. Certain aspects of experience, the subjective aspects, "the direct feeling of it," "will not take the impress directly or indirectly of discursive form (Langer, 1957, p. 22)." The presentational symbol of the artist, however, allows the translation of what is subjective, i.e. "unspeakable, ineffable," into a form which is objective and, hence, communicable.

The evaluator-as-artist, therefore, utilizes artistic symbols and artistic form to communicate those aspects of the educational process which

traditional evaluators and even most ethnographers ignore: the qualities extant in a particular educational experience, or, to use Wallance's (1978) phrase, the "personal lived-in quality of curriculum (p. 144)." The qualities of curricular experience are valued both intrinsically and because they impact on future growth (Dewey, 1936).

Metaphor

Because the critic communicates through the written work, metaphorical language is an essential tool for the evaluator-as artist attempting to portray curricular experience. Metaphor was used extensively in the educational criticisms prepared for the City Building evaluation. For example, in "Shades of Déjà Vu in a Third Grade Classroom," metaphorical language was used to add a qualitative dimension to the physical description of the classroom.

> Throughout the room, books and papers form unplanned collages on desk tops and shelves. In the back of the room, partially hidden from view by a permanent room divider, large sheets of insulation fall haphazardly against the wall. Nearby commercially prepared ecological activity cards spill out of their package onto countertop and floor, while large cardboard boxes covered with dog-eared black construction paper and white construction paper stripes lay exhausted atop one another like victims of a knock-down, dragged-out barroom brawl.

Metaphorical language was also used to portray personal qualities of key participants. In "Democracy and Education is Alive and Well and Living in Mr. Diemo's Seventh Grade City Building Classroom, " I attempted to use metaphor to capture qualities that words like charismatic can only point to.

> Energizing the activities of all the groups and particularly the activities of the planning commission is the electric personality of the teacher, Mr. Diemo. With his wire rim glasses, his dark blue corduroy pants, and a blue and white gingham shirt that could easily feel at home on the cover of a John Denver album, Mr. Diemo...projects a contemporary image.... Mr.Diemo is a consumate theatrical performer. His voice sings with a velvet intensity; his movements seem almost dance-like. Even when standing still, talking to students about their various activities, his hips mirror the emotion in his voice, springing or sliding or oozing from side to side, as though under the influence of Bob Fosse's choreography. His arms and shoulders move too, often in broad, intense, expressively flowing gestures, not unlike the gestures of a French cabaret singer.

Metaphor was relied on, too, to characterize the qualitative aspects of interactions. When Mr. Diemo's homework assignment to the class was unclear and the aide supplied by City Building funds interrupted him to inform him of his lack of clarity, this interruption was characterized as being done "with goody buddy assuredness." When the third grade teacher, Mr. Nopata, responded to the greetings of students, his response is likened to the response of "a hip Nelson Rockefeller on the stump, acknowledging...greetings with the broadest of smiles."

Teacher-student interactions within the classroom also were described with the aid of metaphor. Concerning the theatrical Mr. Diemo, I wrote,

> Yes, Mr. Diemo is a skilled and energetic performer, yet there is no proceneum arch in sight. Clearly this not to be a one-man show; rather this is participatory, environmental, improvisational theater. Here, to paraphrase that astute social commentator, James Durante, everybody is expected to get into the act.

"Democracy and Education is Alive and Well and Living in Mr. Diemo's Seventh Grade City Building Classroom" also contains the following somewhat more specific but still metaphorical description of student instructor interactions.

> Tom Messanger, the architect consultant for this class is in the front of the room leading the class in solving...the problem. His gruff, somewhat ponderous and professorial tone does not appear to command the same sort of natural respect and rapport engendered by Mr. Diemo or Mark. Hints of an us-against-them tug-of-war tension so commonplace between teacher and students in middle school classrooms and so remarkable absent from this classroom yesterday now begin to emerge. Students begin talking to each other, seemingly about extraneous matters; individual students begin making audible, joking asides. When these things occur, Mr. Diemo either raises his hands like a cheerleader trying to quiet booing fans at a football game, or he verbalizes what appears to be this classroom's normally unspoken commandment, "Be serious above all." These unobtrusive interventions settle the offenders and Mr. Messanger and the class can proceed to solve the problem.

Thus, metaphorical language is an important tool for the evaluator-as-artist. It is not the only tool borrowed from the arts and literature, however. Kelly (1975) also emphasizes the importance of plot, theme, and voice.

Voice

Kelly (1975) and Willis (1978) have emphasized that the adoption of a point of view is inevitable with any form of evaluation; within the artistic model, however, the subjective dimension of the critique is made readily apparent through the development of voice. As Kelly notes, voice is "a way of expressing the person of the speaker, of letting the reader know where the narrator stands and how he feels about the subject...(p. 121)"

The "person of the speaker" and the personal perspective from which the classroom is being viewed are made quite apparent in the following introspective musings which come near the beginning of "Shades of Deja Vu in a Third Grade Classroom."

> As we walk on, I begin to sense that my earlier feelings of deja vu have begun to be warmed by touches of sentiment and nostalgia. Lately I had been in too many classrooms whose curriculum mimicked not only the limited content, but also the restrictive form of standardized achievement tests, and I had seen too many teachers behave as cold, detached accountants, unfeelingly prescribing work to robot-like students and then auditing the work the robots produced. Bob Nopata's classroom promised a much needed respite from these experiences. Here was someone who would return me to the educational values of an earlier era, an era now more distant than the years would indicate. Here was someone who promised to transport me to a time when the excessive order and regimentation that are today's educational virtues would be seen, to polemicists, at least, as symptoms of a "crisis in the classroom;" here was someone who could return me to a time when concern for "why children fail" and "how children learn" took precedence over the mere shaping of behavior; here was someone who could return me to an era when educational attention was not limited to grade equivalency scores but was also focused on "the lives of children."
>
> To my surprise, however, the recollection of these polemics of an earlier era also begins to call up a cool caution to play counterpoint to the warmth of nostalgia. I recall that when polemics were transformed to practice, excessive regulations too often were replaced by the absence of any sort of order; pedagogical anarchy resulted. I also recall that a myopic concern with thinking and the development of cognitive processes often left poor penmanship, careless arithmetic errors and other manifestations of sloppiness and carelessness go unnoticed and uncorrected; parents (many of whom were secretaries and accountants whose jobs depended on neatness and accuracy) were legitimately confused and concerned. Finally, I remember that often in the past a concern with the quality of classroom life and a commitment to "love kids" was unaccompanied by a sense of pedagogical responsibility; in such instances children often did not acquire the skills necessary to function in a world where one is not automatically loved.

Clearly, educational climates within a nation change for a multitude of reasons, many related more to general political and economic factors than to anything educators do or do not do. Still, as with the reform minded progressives during the first half of the century (Cremin, 1964), the educational reformers in the sixties must be held partially responsible for their own demise. This thought considerably darkens the feelings of deja vu which just moments earlier had been brightened by nostalgic sentiment.

Plot

Plot is another device the educational critic borrows from the arts and literature. The critic does not simply present a chronology of classroom events (what Kelly would call plot-line), but infuses description with notions of causation and intentionality. The following description of how the City Building Program's emphasis on democratic decision making was actualized in Mr. Nobata's classroom demonstrates the use of plot by the evaluator-as-artist.

Ricky, then, in what appears to be a desperation move, spits out that he does not like Lisa because she has freckles. Lisa begins crying.

Bob's rich baritone voice retains its almost sing-song, Captain Kangaroo gentleness as he reminds Rickey of the time when Rickey had come to him in tears because some students were teasing him because he was Filipino. He gently prods Rickey to see the relationship between this event and his dislike of Lisa because she had freckles.

Students now pick upon this theme, although not as gently. One boy taunts, "Willie has freckles. Ain't he gonna be your friend anymore?" Other students begin pointing to freckles on their own faces or on the faces of other students. Some students get out of their seats and cross over to Rickey's desk. Before long, most of the students were out of their seats displaying the sort of lynch mob psychology that made Alexander Hamilton distrust democracy.

Faced with the onslaught, Rickey too begins to cry. Finally Marshall Bob returns law and order to the classroom by requiring students to take their seats. He gently tells an almost hyperventilating Rickey to step outside with him. Rickey, however, does not move. Bob repeats calmly, "Come on." Rickey manages to emit a hostile, "No!", through the cracks of near frantic inhaling and exhaling.

Lisa, still crying, says to Rickey, "Now you know how I feel." She sounds more wounded than bitter.

A "yes" manages to squeak out of Rickey's still quite enlarged breaths.

Bob tells Rickey to take deep breaths. Then, as he sits on the desk beside Rickey, Bob repeats rhythmically, calmly, calmingly, "Deep

breaths, deep breaths, deep breaths..." As he does this, Bob looks at me, his face glowing like a self-satisfied tap dancer on amateur night who brazenly solicits the audience's approval and applause. Clearly, Bob is sending me a message, a message which I read, "Isn't this great! Isn't this exciting!" I turn away, unsure of the answer I wish to send back.

Three minutes more of "deep breaths, deep breaths, deep breaths..." Then when Medea-size rage is finally reduced to muted sobs, it is sermon time. Reverend Nopata's topic is prejudice; his text is an incident which another teacher had that morning related in the teacher's room. He tells how the teacher had always thought someone was big and fat and clumsy and how pleased the teacher was when she found out that the person was only fat and clumsy, not stupid.

At the conclusion of this little sermon, Lisa begins to talk about her feelings. Seeming more like an adult participant in a group therapy session than a third grader in a classroom Lisa coolly discusses how Rickey had hurt her. Rickey, several minutes closer to his optimum point of emotional upset and missing Lisa's verbal prowess must content himself with a "Me, too," after one of Lisa's articulate renderings of the hurt she has felt.

This little drama begins to wander aimlessly, unable to write itself a final act and provide the resolution only final acts can bring.

Theme

Theme also plays a part in the writings of both the art and educational critic. In the two criticisms serving as examples, in fact, theme more than plot provides the organizational focus, the sense of unity. In "Shades of Déjà Vu...," for example, the dominant theme--that Mr. Nopata's curriculum has the advantages and disadvantages of earlier progressive and open education curricula--emerges at the outset in the description of the classroom and the teacher and reemerges throughout the remaining descriptions as well as in the interpretive and evaluative comments presented in an introspective context throughout the paper. Although no single theme dominates the descriptive section of "Democracy and Education is Alive and Well and Living in Mr. Diemo's Seventh Grade City Building Classroom," subthemes such as student involvement, student self-discipline, the teacher as group member and group leader, and improvisation in the classroom can be found; these subthemes are tied together in the

subsequent interpretive and evaluative sections (in this criticism, interpretation and evaluation generally follow description) which relates classroom practice to John Dewey's educational thought.

The Evaluator as Artist

Artistic Construction and Reconstruction

The educational critic's role is not only artistic because he focuses on the qualities of experience and utilizes the tools of the artist to communicate these qualities. There is also a less literal, more metaphorical meaning of art which applies to the evaluator as artist. This is the meaning Nisbet (1976) employs when he speaks of Sociology as an Art Form and that James(1958) used when he called teaching an art. This meaning is tied to a constructivist conception of knowledge and action. Constructivists argue that human beings create their world. It is believed that reality is not perceived directly; rather, external reality is thought to be mediated by schemata which are at times the unconscious byproducts of social interaction and at other times the result of a more personal construction process analogous to the creative process of the artist.[3] Both types of constructions are relevant to the work of the evaluator-as-artist.

The Evaluator as Artist and the Process of Artistic Reconstruction

Unlike many other evaluators, the evaluator-as-artist acknowledges that while "the world of nature...does not 'mean' anything to molecules, atoms, and electrons (Schutz, 1970, p. 11)", such is not the case with human beings. Since the meaning people impose upon reality ultimately impacts on the way people think and act, the evaluator as artist is concerned with understanding not only personal meanings of relevant actors, but also intersubjective meanings which exist not only in the minds of individuals but also in classroom practice Taylor, 1971. Such understanding is important for external decision makers; it may also be important participants since meaning can often be unconscious.

Both criticisms make at least an attempt to describe extant meanings within each classroom. "Shades of Déjà Vu...", for example, discusses the intersubjec-

tive meaning of reading in Mr. Nopata's class by describing both classroom practice (limited time devoted to reading; reading for utilitarian purposes only) and personal perceptions (a female student: "Oh, we don't have time for reading.") In "Democracy and Education is Alive...," the personal and intersubjective meanings of the traditional skill areas was also probed through observation and interviews.

Although attempts were made to understand and communicate events from the perspective of participants, the limited amount of time spent in the classroom precluded any sophisticated probing of the deep structure of classroom interaction or individual action. Indeed certain anthropologists have argued that no amount of observation time will lead to an internal understanding. Khleif (1974), for example, argues that since a classroom observer can never really be a participant and since he/she is already familiar with the culture and language of his society, he/she will not undergo "cultural shock," and therefore his/her self will not undergo the "configurational change" required to see from participants' perspectives. Khleif may overstate this point somewhat; nevertheless, for whatever reason, what I saw in the two classrooms I critiqued was as much a result of what I brought to the classroom, both by tacit and propositional knowledge, as what was actually there.

The Evaluator as Artist and the Process of Artistic Construction

From the constructivist perspective, the subjective character of the evaluation is not a weakness but a strength, for evaluation cannot avoid being subjective. For the constructivist, reality is multidimensional and any one vantage point will reveal only partial understanding. The evaluator-as-artist has the ability to objectify what he sees from the perspective he occupies by virtue of his own unique history. Hence, he/she can help participants and other decision makers to see aspects of the curriculum they may have overlooked and to see things they have seen before from a different angle.

Particularly helpful in this regard are the various theoretical constructions, both scientific, quasi-scientific, and consciously unscientific, supplied by the various disciplines and fields of study. These constructions are not used for purposes of law-like prediction and control, although they may help approach questions of probable causes and effects more judiciously. Their primary function, however, is to serve as aids to perception. Individually they simplify reality by providing focus and by translating the anticipatory schemata of perception (Neisser, 1976) and the tacit knowledge of experience (Polanyi, 1957) into discursive form; when used in combination with each other, however, these theoretical constructions also help us see more completely.

In addition to tacit knowledge gleaned from six years as a teacher sympathetic to experientally oriented curricula such as The City Building Educational program, various theoretical knowledge was employed in interpreting and evaluating events in the two City Building classrooms I critiqued. In "Democracy and Education is Alive and Well...," for example, Spolin's (1963) theory of improvisation in the theater was used to explain why Mr. Diemo's improvisational style of teaching seemed to be working, and James Moffett's (1968) theory of language development was used to evaluate certain benefits with respect to language development which might accrue from the his interactive style of teaching. In addition, as the title of the criticism implies, the educational thought of John Dewey (and also criticisms of Dewey's position) was also used extensively to evaluate the City Building curriculum as implemented in this classroom. For example, these comments followed a brief discussion of Dewey's cautionary notes on democratic organization of the classroom:

> Mr. Diemo, too, seems sensitive to the issues Dewey has raised with respect to transporting democratic social organization to the classroom. His use of an agenda indicates a willingness to provide direction and focus, yet the agenda is sufficiently non-directive to allow for student initiative and communal decision making. Similarly, Mr. Diemo does not hesitate to exercise direct authority when necessary. As Dewey predicts, however, such occasions are exceedingly rare; normally the class commandment, "Be serious above all," remains an unquestioned and unspoken rule. When a verbal reminder is called for, Mr. Diemo offers it in the interest of the group and the group's communal purpose, not as an

> expression of personal power. Mr. Diemo 's conversation with Frank at the end of the second day indicates both a willingness to exercise direct authority when necessary and the manner in which such authority is exercised.
>
> Thus Mr. Diemo is both member of the group and, by virtue of his "greater maturity...and...greater knowledge of the world, of subject-matters and of individuals," he is the group's natural leader. His leadership, however, does not appear to inhibit students' perception of themselves as full participants in the group's decision making processes. In the words of Jeff, "[T]he kids have the power to overtake the teacher if they vote on it or get up a petition...We could rule out anything Mr. Diemo says, and I think we could do it to most any other teacher if we wanted to." These are not the words of an insurrectionist, but of a responsible citizen aware of his potential political power and the socially sanctioned means for exercising it.

Various theoretical perspectives and research findings were also employed in the criticism of Mr. Nopata's classroom. Included were the findings on the effects of individualization reported by Stallings (1976), discussions of the hidden curriculum, Herbert Kliebard's (1975) discussion of alternative approaches to goals in curriculum organization, Eisner's (1969) discussion of behavioral and expresseive objectives, and cognitive psychologists' discussion of the causes of grooved thinking.

Problems for the Evaluator-as-Artist[4]

Thus far I have tried to note and exemplify what the evaluator-as-artist does. Clearly he/she focuse on aspect of curriculum that are often obscured by the methodologies and/or reporting procedures of other evaluation approaches. Because the evaluator-as artist illuminates idiosyncracy, the process of curriculum, the qualities of the curriculum process, and the use of theory as an aid to perception and action, he/she should provide a valuable supplement to information provided by other evaluators working with other evaluation models. The evaluator-as-artist, however, confronts problems, particularly when he/she evaluates curricula in their interactive forms. A reading of the Joint Committee's (1978) proposed evaluation standards indicates that many of these problems are not unique to the evaluator as artist; even traditional problems are magnified, however, when the evaluator's focus is largely emergent, when the evaluator is his/her own evaluation instrument, and

when the evaluator's report strives for the richness and ambiguity of art rather than the precision and sterility of science.

The remainder of this paper, therefore, focuses on seven problems which arose in connection with the artistic evaluation of the implementation of the City Building Educational Program. Most of the discussion is based on information gleaned from interviews with four teachers and two administrators after they had read the evaluation report. Their opinions on the evaluation and the general evaluation approach ranged from enthusiasm to skepticism. With a few exceptions, however, the focus will be on the difficulties raised.

The Problem of Time

A primary concern in evaluating the evaluation was the effect of the limited amount of observation time. Half of the teachers and administrators interviewed found the classroom descriptions amazingly thorough and accurate (i.e., the descriptions were in line with their own perceptions) and, hence, did not see the limited observation time as troublesome. The project director, for example, indicated that even negative reactions of some teachers may have resulted primarily from other factors than inaccuracies resulting from limited observation time:

> I think alot of the comments hit home. A lot of things made sense to them. I think that's what hurt them the most. I don't know if it was hurt, but the fact thatyou had such a deep perception of what they were doing in the class, and things that they themselves want to change.

The director also discussed comments about him which were included in the program overview. In this overview I complimented the director for fostering a sense of personal and professional community among program participants, but questioned whether group cohesion was not sometimes cemented with an "us-against-them" mentality which stymied external and internal criticisms. Concerning these comments, the director said,

> The things you said about me were really relevant. You only had about a paragraph devoted to me, but of all the things you could have said, they really made me sit and ponder and reevaluate what I was doing.

In contrast to the director, three teachers tended to be critical of the classroom descriptions, although two of these teachers did not relate their criticisms to the limited amount of time allotted for observation. In fact, one of these teachers, Mr. Nopata, reported an ex post facto "an-ha!" experience after reading the criticism of his classroom similar to the one discussed by the project director in the above quotation. One teacher, however, did see the limited amount of observation time as troublesome. Since her comments were particularly insightful, I include excerpt from the transcript of my discussion with her. The discussion focuses on the criticism of Mr. Nopata's classroom.

> Teacher: I just felt if it's gonna be that subjective—let me word it differently. If you were, say, a Chicano college graduate who was raised in a ghetto area and maybe whose parents were illiterate and you came from a different background, I don't think a person like that would have seen things that you saw.
>
> Author: O.K.
>
> Teacher: And I feel like there were alot of things maybe relevant to this area, this culture that you didn't see. It's just like somebody coming from the country going to the city and the things they see are like really out of...they're real, but they're really out of perspective but really not as important as if you were there for three years than those things would become obsolete. There are more important things going on.
>
> Author: Right, but can you see a benefit from seeing things from an outsider's perspective?
>
> Teacher: Yeh. Like I was saying, maybe there are alot of people who would react in the same way, and how would you deal with them so they wouldn't get those kind of feelings.
>
> Author: But is it helpful in the setting? Can you see that it might be beneficial to see things from somebody else's point of view? An outsider's point of view? To see things you may tend to take for granted but which may really be important?
>
> Teacher: O. K., Right. I think maybe if you were here longer and there had been more time, we could have met more often and discussed these things...
>
> Author: O. K., that's the key...
>
> Teacher: We would have learned alot...
>
> Author: And I would have learned alot...

Teacher: And you would have learned alot, and there would have been a lot more going on...The feedback was missing.

This teacher may have exaggerated the effects of limited observation time. I am not at all certain whether my view of Bob's classroom would have been radically altered had I been given more time to observe. I had taught in a ghetto school myself, and, therefore, I was not totally naive to the educational implications of poverty. In addition, my impressions were relatively similar to the views expressed by other teachers and administrators in the district interviewed both before and after the criticism was written. Indeed, further probing indicated that differences in perception may not have been as great as first thought; the metaphors I had chosen had, at least in this reader's mind, distorted my meaning.

Still, it is important to realize that an outsider may easily bring with him/her an insensitivity to environmental constraints which cannot be overcome during a brief period of observation. More importantly, time is essential for the kind of communication for which the evaluator-as artist strives. Since the goal is to help participants see anew, i.e., to see through the eyes of another person, time for interaction and feedback, not to mention time to build mutual trust and respect, is essential. When feedback and interaction are not provided for, the message of the critic can easily be distorted, either consciously or unconsciously, and written off as eminating from a totally unsympathetic value perspective. Impreeise, poetical modes of communication are particularly susceptible to such misinterpretation.

What I am saying, then, suggests that the artist-as-evaluator might work effectively in the context of clinical supervision, a suggestion which has already been made by others(Sergiovanni and Starratt, 1979; Cross, 1977). In addition, if outsiders are employed to bring a fresh perspective (and one principal repeatedly emphasized the need for periodic external assessment), then the artistic evaluator's role ought to be quite similar to the evaluator's role

outlined in the "alternative and extended view" of evaluation discussed by the Stanford Evaluation Consortium (Cronbach and Ross, 1976). This view emphasizes among other things that "[t]he evaluator, instead of running alongside the train making notes through the windows, can board the train and influence the engineer, the conductor, and the passengers..." It also notes that "[t]he evaluator should recognize (and act upon the recognition) that systems are rarely influenced by reports received in the mail (p. 18)."

The Problem of Personal Description

The problem of personal description has been recognized by others who have written about artistic approaches to evaluation. Jenkins and O'Toole (1978), for example, raise the following question: "Can cryptic pen-portrayals of individuals get close enough to their full, rounded uniqueness as people for the human perspective to be defensible (p. 542)?" In attempting to answer their own question, they distinguish between round and flat characters.

> Flat characters are humorous types of caricatures constructed around an idea or quality. Round characters partake of a full imaginative and moral existence. It seems unlikely that the curriculum evaluator will ever compete with the novelist in sheer roundness of characterization. Perhaps the best he can hope for is a few well chosen suggestive phrases held together by a narrative viewpoint, or some sense of an issue that can be sharply personalized (art teaches by example). If so, he is closer to the world of the theater critic than the world of the novelist, and his ethical dilemmas, vis a vis his responsibility to the subjects of the study, are increased rather than dimished. (p. 542)

Jenkins and O'Toole might have added that even great art, with all its complexity and ambiguity, is still an abstraction and therefore an incomplete rendering of reality. To be sure, any focus on curriculum processes must be incomplete, but nobody expects an impersonal Flander's Interaction Analysis, for example, to present a full picture. The power of artistic description, however, results from the illusion of reality it creates.

The personal descriptions were troublesome to half of the teachers in the City Building evaluation. These teachers touched on the problem of multidimensionality discussed by Jenkins and O'Toole. Their primary concern, however, centered on another facet of personal descriptions which Jenkins and O'Toole touch on, the inseparability of public performance and private personality. Many of the teachers asked, "What does hair length have to do with teaching? Isn't such a personal description of me and my actions in the classroom an invasion of my privacy?"

I could certainly make a case for the inclusion of personal description in evaluation. First, I could note that teachers teach themselves as well as the curriculum (Eisner, 1974), and therefore a discussion of personal characteristics and values is a defensible subject for evaluation. I could also note, somewhat defensively, that the personal descriptions I employed in the two illustrative criticisms were never done arbitrarily; they always related to some general point (e.g., an explanation for Mr. Diemo's success with his students). Finally, I could argue that personal descriptions are important in helping a wider audience understand the qualitative experience of the curriculum, should the evaluation report be released to a wider audience.

These arguments, I believe, are valid. They do not, however, obliterate the ethical problem so clearly delineated by Jenkins and O'Toole. There appears to be only two ways out of this dilemma. First, artistic evaluation can be used in the context of clinical supervision with the clear understanding that what the supervisor/critic writes will not be seen by anyone except the teacher being critiqued. Second, if an outside evaluator is used or if the supervisor/critic wishes to release his critique to a wider audience, the teacher must have veto power over the release of any or all of it. In short, questions of ethics as well as questions of utility require the artistic evaluator to initially, at least, play a formative role and write for an audience of one.

The Problem of Metaphor

The problem of personal description is intertwined with the problem of metaphor. Although some teachers and all interviewed administrators considered the use of metaphorical language a welcome relief from the staid writing of educational scientists, many teachers were bothered by the use of metaphor. Particularly troublesome for some was the following metaphorical allusions to the sixties which were made in the opening of "Shades of Deja Vu in a Third Grade Classroom" and which, in fact, introduced the theme which reemerged throughout the critique.

> Bob, Nopata, the City Building Program's third grade teacher, seems like a remnant of the sixties, an aging flower child still managing somehow to bloom and grow in the sunshine despite massive changes in the societal ecology. There are updates, of course. Neat, nondescript slacks and shirt substitue for the outlandish, somstimes slovenly garb of an earlier era; tennis shoes cover what earlier might have been bare feet; a bouncy, almost cocky tennis shoe gait stands in for the sixties' ethereal shuffle. Still certain visual and auditory stimuli—an everpresent guitar, longish black hair pulled back into a ponytail, and a drooping walrus-like moustache, hip speech periodically punctuated with the exclamation, "Man!"—combine with less tangible qualities to create feelings of deja vu.
>
> Three of these less tangible qualities, a playful enthusiasm, an ideological self-assuredness, and a distaste for the status quo, begin to emerge during our very first conversation....We sit together on the floor of Bob's classroom amid a decor that could best be characterized as "early Haight-Ashbury cluttered." The bulletin boards show the neglect and decay of tenement slums....

Interestingly, the teachers who were concerned with this section did not generally question the appropriateness of fit between the metaphorical description and the described reality. Some raised the dimensionality problem discussed above, yet even these individuals conceeded that Mr. Nopata relished his role as outsider and anti-establishment type and that I had "really picked up on that." Rather than appropriateness of fit, therefore, my critics were more concerned with questions of ethical appropriateness discussed above. "Was it justifiable for the evaluator to allude to the personal preferences and life style of the teacher even obliquely," they asked.

Obliqueness, in fact, created difficulties in and of itself. As I discovered when I interviewed the teachers, when one says one thing to mean another, one can easily be "misread". For example, I intended the above description of Mr. Nopata

to be read basically as description and not evaluation. As I make clear latter on, I personally look back on the sixties, both professionally and personally, with mixed feelings, just as I saw positive and negative aspects of Mr. Nopata's curriculum. Yet in retrospect, I can understand why Bob Nopata, after reading the first page of my criticism could say, "This guy is out to get me." Clearly many people, particularly in a conservative school district like the one in which Bob works, do not share my ambivalence toward the age of flower children, and to them, my metaphor may say more than I intend. The many positive features of Mr. Nopata's classroom pointed to later in the criticism could easily be obscured by the evocative character of the opening metaphors.

I am reluctant to abandon the use of unconventionalized metaphor. Indeed, the desire to help people to see anew seemingly requires new ways of talking. In addition, acknowledging idiosyncracy requires metaphorical description. Metaphor, however, must be used cautiously; the safeguards discussed in the context of personal description must also be employed with all metaphorical descriptions.

The Problem of Plot

The attribution of causation presents other problems. Social psychologists (Harvey and Kidd, 1976; Jones, 1972), for example, speak of the fundamental attribution error, i.e., the tendency of individuals to overestimate personality or dispositional characteristics and downplay situational pressure in explaining events. When the evaluator's focus is specifically on the teacher, the evaluator can easily be even more prone than usual to commit the fundamental attribution error.

I may have committed this error in "Shades of Deja Vu in a Third Grade Classroom." In this criticism, I specifically related many of the difficulties I saw in Mr. Nopata's classroom to Mr. Nopata's tendency to oversimplify complex questions and to his generally uncritical anti-establishment ideology. Although I indicated that the City Building curriculum provided an ideological framework to support Mr. Nopata's view of education and that the perceived "us-against-them" attitude prevalent among

City Building personnel may have lent social support, I said nothing about the role Mr. Nopata's school may have played in fostering what I considered an uncritical anti-establishement stance.

One teacher I interviewed after the evaluation report was released indicated that Mr. Nopata's attitudes may have been at least in part the product of his situation. Specifically she indicated that all the teachers in his school were hostile toward him and wanted to get him out of the school, and he was in fact transferred at the end of the year.

In a sense, the attribution of causality inevitably involves one in a chicken/egg type of controversy, and Collingwood's (1946) discussion of the relativity of causes indicates this controversy is incapable of solution. In fact, if Collingwood is correct when he asserts that the attribution of causation is inevitably tied to purpose, then an attribution bias in favor of the teacher as opposed to the environment is not only inevitable but also desirable when, as with "Shades of Deja Vu..." the designated audience, initally, at least, is the teacher. The relativity of causes, however, does provide yet another reason for using artistic evaluation primarily in a formative role and for insuring that if educational criticism are to be released to summative decision makers, program participants be guaranteed veto power over material describing them and their actions.

The Problem of Distance

Michael Apple (1978) raises a related problem in his critique of the qualitative case studies in Willis' Qualitative Evaluation. Apple criticizes most of the case study writers for failing to look beyond the school to the broader political and economic environment and making that broader environment a part of the explanatory framework. As Apple notes, "This very 'external' context provides substantial legitimation for the allocation of teacher' time and energies and for the kind of cultural capital embodied in the school itself (p. 502)."

Apple's criticism could be applied to the two educational criticisms being used as examples in this paper. The fault, however, lies not so much with the specific criticisms but with their general ameliorative purpose. Whenever

the objective is to help practitioner to improve the curriculum, the evaluator-as-artist must focus on what such decision makers have the power to improve. This means that the critic must accept the parameters set by the existing social order and direct his/her attention to options which are possible within those parameters. Thus ameliorative artistic evaluation, just as ameliorative evaluation in general, is inevitably a relatively conservative activity.

Indeed, in the two criticisms being used here for purposes of illustration, social and political forces were referred to, but reference to such forces was made in the context of putting legitimate constraints on classroom practice. Consider, for example, the following reflections on a conversation I had with Mr. Nopata about his reading program.

> One could argue...that we should not be concerned with decoding skills and, hence, reading until we have helped children develop the cognitive processes which will be brought into play in the process of comprehending what is read. This appears to be Bob's position, so I concede that a case can be made for this position in principle. I note, however, that in this less than best of all possible worlds, social reality dictates that decoding and encoding be emphasized at the outset of schooling. I note that once students leave the confines of Bob's classroom, they will be labeled failures if they cannot read (and I could have added, write and compute). I also note that statistics indicate that slow readers in the earlier years are almost always slow readers in high school, and I argue that even if this is a result of socially created phenomena, such phenomena must still be contended with.

The Problem of Logistics

Some of the problems with the evaluation resulted not from the evaluation itself but, as one teacher put it, "from how the evaluation was used." In violation of the agreement between the teachers and the project director and in contradiction to statements the project director had made to us during negotiations, the evaluation report, including the classroom criticisms, was released to other administrators in the school even before the teachers had seen them, much less had an opportunity to decide to release the material. The project director's actions were understandable. He was attempting to salvage the program in the wake of Proposition 13 cutbacks, and he felt that the evaluation which was balanced, but on-balance, more positive than negative, might be useful. Though understandable, the project director's actions

were ethically questionable and point up the need for clear reporting procedures which are outlined in detail and in writing.

The Problem of the Theoretician-Practitioner Gap

Happily, the problem of the theoretician-practioner gap was a problem which existed more in my anticipations than in actuality; even those teachers who felt a gap existed, agreed that it could have been bridged with more time and more opportunity for interaction and feedback. To my surprise, no teacher was bothered by the use of theoretical references and specific citations. Eisner has argued that specific references are necessary to provide depth and intellectual support for interpretive and evaluative comments. I have always been concerned that such citations would be perceived by practitioners as an academic affectation or, worse yet, as cocktail party style theory dropping. The teachers I interviewed, however, indicated they appreciated such citations and some suggested the references might make an an excellent reading list for an inservice seminar.

Thus, in this evaluation, the theoretician-practitioner gap was relatively narrow. Of course, I should add that it helped greatly that both evaluators had relatively extensive classroom teaching experience; the first question the teachers asked of us, in fact, centered on our experience in the classroom, not in the university.

Conclusion

The evaluator-as-artist brings a touch of humanity to the evaluation process. Not only does he/she remind us that evaluation is a human activity inescapably intertwined with human subjectivity, he/she also reminds us that education itself is rooted in human interaction. What educational practitioners perceive, believe, value, and think impacts not only on the curriculum that is taught, but also on the curriculum that is learned; the evaluator-as-artist offers the educational practitioner an opportunity to step outside of himself/herself and to view the personalized curriculum he/she teaches through the eyes of another human being.

The very humanity which is the artistic evaluator's strength, however, also poses unique problems. Seven of these problems have been discussed in this paper. Although these problems have been gleaned from informal interviews with a relatively small number of respondents after an evaluation conducted under less than ideal conditions, commonsense indicates that the seven problems discussed here transcend the idiosyncracy of individual and situation. Therefore, it has been suggested that the evaluator-as-artist adopt primarily a formative role, possibly working within the context of clinical supervision. If the artistic evaluator is an outsider, ample time for feedback and interaction must be provided. In addition, it has been argued that the practitioner who is the subject of the artistic evaluator's criticism must retain veto power over the release of the criticism to summative decision makers or any other individual. Only if these suggestions are adhered to can the evaluator-as-artist's work be ethically desirable, politically possible, and practically useful.

NOTES

1. George Willis' recent book, Qualitative Evaluation, rectifies this situation somewhat. In addition to exemplifying the diversity of approaches coming under the qualitative evaluation umbrella, selections by McCutcheon and Vallance exemplify aspects of the artistic subset of qualitative evaluation.

2. For detailed discussions of the differences between curricula organized around objectives and those organized around activities, see, Kleibard (1975) and Eisner (1969).

3. The existence of innate and developmental schemata has also been hypothesized.

4. The problems discussed in the following section refer specifically to the use of artistic approaches to research for purposes of evaluation. Elsewhere I have suggested that educational researchers have underestimated the potential of naturalistic methodology and artistic modes of reporting for non-evaluative research (See: Donmoyer, "Logical, Psychological, and Phenomenological Generalization; Toward a Rationale for the Use of Naturalistic Methodology and Modes of Reporting in Curriculum and Instruction Research," Paper presented at A.E.R.A. annual meeting, April, 1979). While the use of artistic methods and modes of reporting in a non-evaluative context is not without problems, these problems are not identical to the problems confronting the artistic evaluator.

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